

May 27, 1976

CIA Information Review Committee
c/o Gene F. Wilson
Information and Privacy Coordinator
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Working Copy

LOS/IR-41
JUN 15-1976

Sir:

This letter is to appeal the CIA's refusal to declassify finding aids to National Security Estimates, pursuant to a mandatory declassification review requested by letter of March 13, 1976. Copies of that letter and the letter of denial, dated April 30, 1976, are enclosed for your convenience.

The arguments set forth in the denial letter in support of the continued classification of the requested documents do not, in fact, support the conclusion that the documents contain no separable information that is no longer in need of protection.

The assertion that "the countries and topics of greatest concern to the US intelligence community and to US policy makers" require protection at least ten years after the time of that concern has little merit. One need only read the newspapers to know which countries and topics are matters of concern to the United States; it is common knowledge that such topics include the intentions of the Soviet Union and the Republic of China, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the deployment of potentially hostile troops. For the CIA to acknowledge such concern, at least ten years after the event, would be news to no one. If the complete declassification of the requested records would actually disclose hitherto secret concerns, that information could be deleted from the records before their release. Surely the vast majority of the NIE's deal with topics widely acknowledged to concern the US, and the fact of their existence could be safely disclosed.

The argument that the disclosure of the requested records would reveal "relative gaps in intelligence information" might be tenable if the requested records were current or of recent vintage. Such gaps, if any, would be more than a decade old, and are of no more than historical interest since they would not reveal any current intelligence activities.

The putative "adverse effect on US foreign relations with the countries in question" might actually occur in exceptional cases, but not as a general rule. All nations are cognizant of the mission of the US intelligence community; an official disclosure

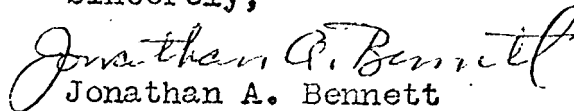
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of the fact that the intelligence community has prepared estimates, pursuant to that mission, of the intentions or capabilities of other nations is not ground for offense, except in unusual circumstances.

I hereby request that the CIA Information Review Committee consider the classification of the requested records and inform me of the result of that review in accordance with the provisions of section 3(C) of the NSC Directive of May 17, 1972. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,


Jonathan A. Bennett